
Higher Education Committee

SSB 5044

Brief Description: Changing work-study provisions.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Kilmer, Berkey, Kastama, Schoesler, Marr, Shin, Rockefeller, Eide, Jarrett, Keiser, Tom and Kohl-Welles).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Tasks the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) with adopting State Work Study (SWS) rules that: (1) restrict, to the extent practicable, the proportion of funds available to nonresident students; and, (2) encourage job placements in high employer demand occupations.

Hearing Date: 3/6/09

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195)

Background:

The State Work Study (SWS) program helps students from low and middle income families earn money for college while gaining work experience. The SWS awards are based on student financial need, the availability of SWS funds at the institution attended, and the amount of other financial aid awarded. The award amount varies but is generally around \$2000 to \$5000 per year. In order to be eligible, a student must maintain good standing in his or her course of study and be enrolled at least half-time. Students may work an average of 19 hours per week during the academic year and up to 40 hours per week during school breaks.

Public and private employers are eligible to participate in the program. Work study programs offer many benefits to participating employers. It allows the employer to hire a student as a part-time worker at a reasonable cost since the program reimburses the employer for a portion of the student's wages. Many employers use the program to "try out" and later hire promising students

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as permanent employees. To participate, the employer has to sign a contract and send it, together with a short business profile and a job description, to the institution of higher education. The employer is required to keep track of hours and make sure that the student does not work more than the program allows. After the employer pays the student, the employer submits a request for reimbursement to the institution.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is charged with adopting SWS rules according to the terms and priorities set forth in statute:

- The SWS work must not result in the displacement of employed workers, impair existing contracts for services, or supplant classified positions.
- Priority must be given to students who are considered "resident students" for purposes of in-state tuition, particularly former foster youth. A student who is a "resident student" by virtue of being a spouse or a dependent of a person who is on active military duty stationed in the state is excepted from this prioritization.
- Job placements in fields related to academic or vocational pursuits, particularly off-campus jobs and off-campus community placements, are called out as priorities.
- Job placements in occupations that meet state economic development goals are encouraged, "especially" those in international trade and international relations.

Summary of Bill:

Rules developed by the HECB shall, to the extent practicable, limit the proportion of SWS funds expended upon nonresident students to 15 percent, or such lesser amount as specified by the Legislature in the biennial appropriations act. The priority given to resident students shall no longer except those students who qualify as residents by virtue of being a spouse or a dependent of a person who is on active military duty stationed in the state. The rules shall encourage job placements in "high employer demand" occupations that meet the state's economic development goals, "including" those in international trade and international relations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.